

FINAL REPORT

**AGRICARTA - AN INTEGRATED ELECTRONIC
INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR SASKATCHEWAN'S AGRI-
FOOD INDUSTRY - ENHANCING THE AGRICARTA
INFORMATION SYSTEM**

19970178

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Canada¹⁻¹

Saskatchewan

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AgriCarta -
An Integrated Electronic Information System
for
Saskatchewan's Agri-Food Industry

Final Funding Submission and
Project Report #9

Project Accomplishments and Results as of September 30, 2000

Submitted to:

Ron Kehrig
Agri-Food Innovation Fund

Submitted by:

Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc.

Date:

September 30, 2000



1.0 Summary

AgriCarta is an agricultural information retrieval system on the Internet, which brings the advantages of emerging information technologies to the agricultural community in Saskatchewan. The objective of AgriCarta is to provide information and services to Saskatchewan producers in order to reduce access costs, enhance timeliness, enhance decision-making support, and improve access to markets and market information.

AgriCarta has been operational on the Internet since late November of 1997. There have been on-going enhancements and additional content added to this Internet service since that time.

The project is now completed and this is the final report required for a final payment of funds under the contract between Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. and AFIF.

It is believed that the project provided a great many Saskatchewan farmers and farm organizations with a reason to begin to use the Internet as a farm business tool. It took the "hype" surrounding the Internet and gave some focus to using the Internet as a business management tool for use by Saskatchewan farmers.

AgriCarta continues to be a useful business management tool to many Saskatchewan farmers, and will continue to serve Saskatchewan farmers as an important feature accessible through the website, AginfoNet.com, which is now managed and operated by AginfoNet Canada Corporation (see below).

Update on AgriCarta Since Last Report:

Since the last report in March of 2000, efforts have continued to focus on improving and expanding the information contained in AgriCarta. Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. developed a new area in AgriCarta, which allows potential new resource specialists to "sign up" on-line, reducing the amount of time and effort required to recruit and train new resource specialists. We have also posted an on-line help manual to assist those currently moderating an area in AgriCarta. These efforts will lower the on-going administration requirement for AgriCarta beyond September 30, 2000 when funding under the contract with AFIF ends.

An on-line survey of AgriCarta users was conducted from March 18, 2000 to May 1, 2000. The purpose of the survey was to help determine demographics and information requirements of AgriCarta users. According to the results, 74% of AgriCarta users are from Saskatchewan, 97% of AgriCarta users rate its content as good to excellent, and Crops, Livestock, and Farm Business Management are the most commonly visited areas of the site.

Statistics on the usage of the AgriCarta service indicates the following:

- From March 2000 to September 2000, AgriCarta was visited approximately 115,000 times (based on WebTrends statistics).

- Currently 32 moderated subject areas and 6,403 links to information are organized in AgriCarta.
- There was a 50% awareness of AgriCarta among Saskatchewan farmers who have an Internet connection. (April 1999 survey)
- Warren's Farm and Ranch Directory On-Line received approximately 3935 queries from March 2000 to August 2000.
- The On-line Catalogue service, completed in November 1998 had seventeen vendors and 58 products as of September 30, 2000. There are also six members listed under the affiliates program of the On-Line catalogue.

Update on Aginfonet.com, the Website:

This past spring and summer major efforts were put toward planning and implementation of a new Aginfonet.com site design from which AgriCarta is accessed. This new design will be launched in October 2000. AgriCarta remains as a high profile link from the Aginfonet.com homepage. AgriCarta retains all of its navigational structure and functionality and a new service was added to the AgriCarta home page, a direct link to the new "Virtual Community of Excellence." This is a new service developed by Saskatchewan Aginfonet Inc., with funding from the AFIF contract "Completing the Strategic Circle – Focusing on Permanency and Sustainability". This will allow users to research and learn more about how information technology has impacted western Canadian agriculture.

The new design of Aginfonet.com will also result in an amalgamation of the AFIF funded e-business services developed by Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc., in a new area called MAINstreet. This is where the virtual mall known as MAINstreet Marketplace, the On-Line Catalogue and Aginfonet.com's Business Centre will reside. The area will be accessible throughout the new Aginfonet.com website, through a link called "Shopping". This area will continue to demonstrate, to the Saskatchewan agricultural community, e-business applications.

Update on Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. and Aginfonet Canada Corporation:

Significant effort was made since November 1998 to address the issue of sustainability of the services developed under this AFIF contract. The non-profit Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. was successful in licensing certain assets to the for-profit company, Aginfonet Canada Corporation, which was created in 1999.

As of November 1, 1999, Aginfonet Canada Corporation accepted certain expense obligations to keep the Aginfonet.com website operational and in fact, to continue to expand its usefulness to Saskatchewan farmers. It has also agreed to continue to provide certain services for free to Saskatchewan farmers for the term of this licensing agreement. Aginfonet Canada Corporation is in a position to support ongoing overhead to enable many of the services developed by Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc., under its AFIF contracts, to continue.

Steps to seek additional sponsors of AgriCarta and/or for selling advertising on AgriCarta to generate revenue to assist with the overhead associated with maintaining the service will continue to be pursued by Aginfonet Canada Corporation.

In May 2000, Aginfonet Canada Corporation received additional investment dollars, which will assist the company to sustain and grow its service offering to the western Canadian agriculture industry. This includes a commitment to the on-going maintenance and management of AgriCarta.

Additional investment will also assist Aginfonet Canada Corporation to build on the lessons learned from the implementation of AFIF and related contracts, and apply it on a larger scale to the entire western Canadian agriculture industry.

As an example, this expertise will be applied to a new service on Aginfonet.com, called AgriSelect, which will serve as a western Canadian marketplace for farm inputs.

2.0 Technical Report

2.1 Background and Objectives

Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. submitted a project proposal to AFIF on October 15, 1996 titled "Agricultural Association Information and Program Delivery Through Interactive On-Line Technologies." In early 1997, Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. was asked by AFIF to consider managing a much larger, but somewhat similar project. Called AgriCarta, the project was for the development of a comprehensive agricultural information retrieval system using the Internet.

The AFIF Board accepted a proposal for "AgriCarta - An Integrated Electronic Information System for Saskatchewan's Agri-Food Industry" in April 1997. Detailed project plans were prepared by Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. and submitted in May to the AFIF Secretariat. A contract was signed in early July and work began immediately.

The project's objectives are to:

- build a user friendly, interactive, effective and efficient structure for the access of information relevant to the Saskatchewan producer,
- create a self sustaining, industry model for the provision and upkeep of information,
- create a business tool for the use of the Saskatchewan producer,
- encourage the use of information technologies
- demonstrate leadership in the application of information technologies in the agricultural industry.

2.2 Project Activities, Achievements, Papers Written

Activity 1:

Activity 1 is complete. Warren's Farm and Ranch Directory / AgInfoNet On-Line went "live" on Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc.'s website in the first week of September 1997, as per the project plan. An agreement was signed between Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. and Warren's Farm and Ranch Directory to jointly own and manage the on-line service to March of 2000.

Meetings with Warren's Farm & Ranch Directory were held beginning in September 1999 to discuss a new contractual agreement to ensure the long-term viability of Warren's Farm & Ranch Directory/AgInfoNet On-Line. An on-going arrangement for the management of the service and the sharing of revenue from March 2000 onward was being considered by both parties. Late in November 1999, Warren's Farm & Ranch Directory put the negotiations on hold because they were in discussions with another party about the sale of the business.

In late March of 2000, Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. was advised that the business had been sold to DirectWest Publishing. Further negotiations over the ownership of the on-line version of Warren's Farm & Ranch Directory and an on-going relationship with the Aginonet.com website did not result in any agreement.

The on-line service available from Aginonet.com will be removed as a link in the fall of 2000. DirectWest Publishing will continue to provide a version of the on-line directory from their own sites.

Activity 2:

Activity 2, the AgriCarta Design Structure, is complete. The prototype of AgriCarta was presented to the project steering group on September 19, 1997. A "thumbs up" was given to proceed with the development of the production version.

Activity 3:

Activity 3, the Development of AgriCarta and Linkages to Existing Website Information is complete. In the summer of 1997, two students were hired to conduct content searches for agricultural links and approximately 2000 were catalogued. A server was leased from SaskTel to house AgriCarta.

Under Activity 3, the following initial producer groups worked with us to manage their content areas of expertise:

- Saskatchewan Alfalfa Seed Producers Association
- Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association
- Saskatchewan Winter Cereal Growers
- Farm Woodlot Association of Saskatchewan
- Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association

In the fall of 1997, an AgriCarta brochure was produced for the marketing of AgriCarta. Over 1,000 were distributed at Agribition and over 10,000 were distributed in December 1997 to Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. members for their brochure displays at their places of business, or were sent out through member mail outs, or distributed in member conference kits.

AgriCarta was "launched" on Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc.'s website on November 26, 1997, during Agribition. It was also demonstrated to the board of AFIF on November 26, 1997.

We established approximately 800-catalogued links within AgriCarta by the end of November. Between December 1997 and March 1998 search capabilities were added with the use of the "Webinator" Search Engine. An additional 400 links were established.

Activity 4:

Activity 4 is now complete and the activity ran from January 1998 to September 2000.

January 1998 to December 1998:

After getting under way in January 1998, with the signing of a second contract between AFIF and Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc., a part-time student was used to add content to AgriCarta in January and February. Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. received direction from the AFIF board in January 1998 about changes to AgriCarta regarding recognition and visual identity and these were made on the site.

An agriculture graduate was hired beginning February 1, 1998 as an agricultural content specialist. Faith Martin worked closely with producer groups and worked to identify enhancements for the AgriCarta service and to help with the long-term sustainability of both AgriCarta and the associated AginfoNet.com website. A second Agrologist was hired August 10, 1998 as an agricultural content specialist. Terri-Lynn Holownia worked with additional producer organizations. Both Faith and Terri-Lynn oversaw the quality of the content and the organizational structure of AgriCarta.

A comments section, news area and other features on AgriCarta were launched in April of 1998.

AgriCarta had a presence at the 1998 Farm Progress Show and the 1998 Agribition using a new booth and display.

Regular meetings of an informal advisory group for AgriCarta continued with meetings held in March, June and November of 1998 (Subsequent meetings were held in March and December of 1999 and a final group meeting was held on December 3, 1999. At that meeting the group and the Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. board felt they had achieved their goals and more meetings were no longer required).

The working group of AFIF also reviewed progress to date on February 23, 1998 and on September 29, 1998.

For the first year of the project, a number of meetings were held with AIMS and Fieldstone Marketing and Public Relations about their complementary activities under AFIF. Regular meetings continued with AIMS concerning assisting each other with AFIF activities.

In the summer of 1998 three summer students were hired to add content and links to AgriCarta.

In August 1998, Ken Pedersen, an Agrologist with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, was assigned to help build and manage AgriCarta content. Ken only worked on this project for a couple of months due to his health condition.

Research was conducted regarding the "e-commerce" components of AgriCarta and a detailed project plan for Activity 5 was prepared and submitted at the end of May for the consideration of the AFIF board in October 1998. Approval was received to proceed in December 1998.

A new feature called the Processors, Dealers and Suppliers Registry linking AgriCarta content to Ag business was built and launched in the fall of 1998.

An On-line Catalogue was built for AgriCarta participants and AgInfoNet members, in preparation for the development of an e-store. It was launched in the fall of 1998.

January 1999 to December 1999:

In January 1999, two co-op students from the University of Regina were hired to build content into AgriCarta and to research additional links.

Business development and marketing plans for the fall/winter of 1998/1999 were developed to provide the action items for fall and winter promotion, speaking engagements and meetings. With two agrologists now on staff for AgriCarta, an extensive extension program was developed and completed to promote AgriCarta and the use of the Internet as a farm business tool.

Work on chat areas, discussion groups and email services in AgriCarta were put on hold because a survey of AgriCarta participants did not indicate a high level of interest. We then focused activities on improving the content and organization of AgriCarta, and on new e-commerce services.

In May 1999, one University of Regina Co-op student agreed to continue his work term until the end of August 1999.

A commitment was made to work more closely with Alberta and Manitoba (through government, universities, trade shows) due to the recognition of the regional nature of the industry and the valuable content contribution available from outside Saskatchewan.

The addition of new categories to AgriCarta and changes to existing categories was completed in July 1999.

The "Value Add" category of AgriCarta was removed in September 1999 due to a lack of information available. The information from this category was placed within the remaining AgriCarta category structure.

The Business Registry was consolidated with the members' directory on the Aginfonet.com website and renamed "Ag Industry Links" based on a reassessment of industry interest and to lower administration (and ongoing) costs.

Significant improvements to the "Buy and Sell" area on the Aginfonet.com website were made to accommodate the constantly growing number of users. The "Buy and Sell" area is now database driven and it is much easier for Aginfonet.com staff to manage as well as provides for users to edit/delete their own ads. Both the "AgLinks" and "Buy and Sell" areas are extensions of AgriCarta, as part of the effort to link information to products and services.

Significant changes were made to the "Markets" area of Aginfonet.com. The format was modified to make it easier to locate information and a number of links were added to give the area more of a "Canadian" focus. Linking content to markets and products and services was part of the AgriCarta vision.

The Ag Events area was modified to include more Canadian events and a standard format was developed to add events for our "Affiliates" (formerly "Members").

January 2000 to September 30, 2000:

Aginfonet Canada Corporation negotiated a new contract with Environment Canada effective January 2000 to ensure the weather available from Aginfonet.com to Saskatchewan farmers was second to none other on the Internet. The weather feature now provides weather forecasts for all of Canada, with a significant increase in the number of towns/cities for each province. In addition to the Radar Maps and Satellite Images, "Current Jetstream" information is also provided.

A new and updated AgriCarta "look", including the AgriCarta logo, was launched in February 2000. With the new look, we also added logos of our major content providers to the home page of AgriCarta. Currently, we have logos for Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Manitoba Agriculture, Alberta Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan and AFIF. Links to a number of Aginfonet.com's products and services have also been added to AgriCarta's home page including Warrens Farm and Ranch Directory, Ag. Industry Links, On-Line Catalogue, Buy and Sell and MAINstreet, as part of AgriCarta's vision to link content to business.

Due to an increased interest in the "Value Add" subject, as well as increased content accessible on the Internet, the "Value Add" category was added back to AgriCarta on March 1st, 2000.

An on-line survey of AgriCarta users was conducted from March 18, 2000 to May 1, 2000. The purpose of the survey was to help determine demographics and information requirements of AgriCarta users. According to the results, 74% of AgriCarta users are from Saskatchewan, 97% of AgriCarta users rate its content as good to excellent, and Crops, Livestock, and Farm Business Management are the most commonly visited areas of the site.

In spring 2000, a new area in AgriCarta was developed, which allows potential new resource specialists to "sign up" on-line. This will reduce the amount of time and effort required to recruit and train new Resource Specialists. We have also posted an on-line help manual to assist those currently moderating an area in AgriCarta. This manual is available through the AgriCarta administration menu.

In the spring and summer of 2000 major efforts have been put toward planning and implementation of a major Aginonet.com site re-launch for the fall of 2000. AgriCarta has retained all of its navigational structure and functionality with a direct link to the new "Virtual Community of Excellence" added to AgriCarta's home page, which is a new service developed by Saskatchewan Aginonet Inc., with funding from the AFIF contract "Completing the Strategic Circle – Focusing on Permanency and Sustainability". This service will allow users to research and learn more about the impact information technology has made to western Canadian agriculture.

In the fall of 2000 arrangements are being pursued with Agri-Ville to link to their discussion groups from AgriCarta's home page. Agri-Ville is a website with a community of Western Canadian farmers. This would provide AgriCarta users with a discussion forum that is moderated by industry experts.

Also as part of the Aginonet.com site re-launch, the name of the "Ag Industry Links" area will be changed to "AgLinks". Enhancements to the area may include the addition of an affiliate news area, and a link to Agri-Ville's event calendar, which will allow users to post their own events, rather than for Aginonet.com to maintain our own.

While Activity 4 is completed as of September 30, 2000, under the contract between Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. and AFIF, the AgriCarta service will continue to be managed and offered to Saskatchewan farmers.

Activity 5:

Activity 5 is now complete.

Under Activity 5, the planning and development of the "AgInfoNet Business Centre" began in July 1999. The on-line business centre was developed as a means to demonstrate the use of e-business to the Saskatchewan Ag industry. Net.commerce software was purchased from IBM. An agreement with CUETS was signed to use their payment gateway services, allowing visitors of the site to purchase products and services on-line in a secure environment. The AgInfoNet Business Centre was developed with six products and services being offered. Encryption security was purchased from VeriSign. The AgInfoNet

Business Centre was launched in November 1999.

With the experience and associated infrastructure in place, the Business Centre provided a framework to build an industry "mall" for agri-business and to further demonstrate the use of these technologies. MAINstreet Marketplace was launched in March 2000. It essentially allows a number of agricultural businesses to become a member of the mall and have a link from the mall to their own e-store. Initially, three stores were to be included in the launch of MAINstreet, but due to unexpected delays (i.e. setting up merchant accounts with CUETS), "Last Mountain Berry Farms" was the only store to be a part of the mall for the launch. A new merchant, "Riese's Canadian Lake Wild Rice", was added in June 2000.

These experiences gave Aginfonet.com staff the experience and working examples to discuss e-business and e-business applications with agricultural interests in Saskatchewan at meetings, tradeshow, and conferences.

On March 23, 2000 Saskatchewan Aginfonet, Inc. hosted a successful one day conference in Saskatoon titled "E-Business for Agriculture – It's Here" to encourage agribusiness to use the Internet. The launch of MAINstreet coincided with the conference and those in attendance proved to be an excellent audience in which to explain the opportunities and challenges of e-business.

The new design of Aginfonet.com in the fall of 2000 will result in an amalgamation of the AFIF funded e-business services, in a new area called MAINstreet. This is where our virtual mall known as MAINstreet Marketplace, our On-line Catalogue and Aginfonet.com's Business Centre will reside. The area will be accessible throughout the new Aginfonet.com website, through a link called "Shopping". This area serves to illustrate to the agriculture community different e-business applications and has provided Aginfonet.com with expertise in the business of e-business for sharing through workshops, meetings and tradeshow that staff are often asked to attend.

2.3 Other Opportunities That Were Pursued for Further Development of the Industry

We saw the opportunity to expand the scope and impact of the IT projects funded by AFIF, and pursued a number of possibilities including discussion groups, chat and list servers for Ag associations. However, these groups did not have a demand for these services at that time.

Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. pursued working with the Saskatchewan Research Council, or some other group, to create an on-line trading service (such as OPIS; Organic Produce Listing Service), but these groups did not see the opportunity to work with Saskatchewan Aginfonet, Inc. or were focused in other areas.

Also, initial efforts to create awareness and adoption was focused on the producer, but in the last year of the project there was more focus on encouraging Agribusiness to use the Internet. Two successful e-business conferences were held (March 10, 1999 in Regina and March 23, 2000 in Saskatoon) to partially address this need. The 1999-2000-field program

plan called for attendance at a number of major tradeshow and events in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Many ag-businesses were spoken to about doing business on the "net" and to pass on the experience gained from the AFIF funded e-commerce initiatives.

We forwarded a number of proposals to Agriculture and AgriFood Canada about sponsoring the development of an on-line conference management centre that could be offered to the industry. However, they were unable to provide approval in time to complete the project during the timeline they required.

To sustain and continue to grow AgriCarta beyond AFIF funding Aginfonet.com will continue to seek additional sponsors of AgriCarta and seek to sell advertising on AgriCarta to generate revenue.

A commercial contract was in the process of being negotiated for the on-going management and marketing of Warren's Farm and Ranch Directory On-line (beyond September 30, 2000) but this failed to materialize with the change in ownership in March 2000.

Efforts to find an on-going commitment from Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food to support the sustainability of Aginfonet.com and AgriCarta (as either an equity partner in Aginfonet Canada Corporation or under a services agreement) did not materialize into any commitment.

2.4 Information on Project Deliverables and Performance Indicators

Update as of September, 2000:

AgriCarta "Visitors":

AgriCarta continues to be a popular service available from the Aginfonet.com website. In March 2000, AgriCarta received 24,044 "user sessions" or "visitors". Approximately 115,000 "visitors" went to AgriCarta from March 2000 to August 2000.

Warren's Farm and Ranch Directory on-line Service "Visitors":

Warren's Farm and Ranch Directory (WF&RD) has been on the Internet for over three years. There were approximately 3,935 queries of this service between March 2000 and August 2000.

Increase in memberships to Aginfonet.com's website:

Aginfonet.com continues to receive new memberships from industry and membership is currently at 152. There have been some members leave for a variety of reasons, therefore the number has been relatively constant for the last 6 months.

Feedback from comments from the AgInfoNet Website:

Feedback received on the Aginonet.com website was monitored for AgriCarta as well as a feedback form was set up on AgriCarta. Feedback from the on-line form was limited but in all cases was complementary.

Revenue generated by Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. to support self-sufficiency for AgriCarta and other Services:

Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. entered into a licensing agreement with Aginonet Canada Corporation to ensure certain services continued to be offered on-line to Saskatchewan producers, including AgriCarta.

In May, 2000 Aginonet Canada Corporation received significant outside investment dollars, which will assist the company to sustain and grow its service offering to western Canadian agriculture. This includes the costs associated with the on-going maintenance of the AgriCarta service.

Other activities to support self-sufficiency include the continual pursuit of advertising and sponsorship opportunities of the AgriCarta service with western Canadian organizations and businesses.

Number of links to AgriCarta site:

At the launch there were 800 links established and another 400 by the end of April 1998. Now there are 6403 links. Just as important as the number of links, is the quality of those links. With two agrologists working on the AgriCarta initiative, many links were deleted, as they were not relevant to prairie agriculture; so only quality links appear in AgriCarta. Maintenance of high quality links and content remains a priority for AgriCarta.

Feedback from annual survey:

The last major survey was complete in April 1999. The Trimension Group of Saskatoon completed the third annual market survey of Internet use by Saskatchewan producers. Highlights of the 1999 *Farm Internet Survey* include:

- 50% of respondents have heard of AgriCarta, compared to 34% in 1998
- Of those 50%, 38% have accessed it.
- Producers heard about AgriCarta mainly through Aginonet.com or through surfing, word of mouth, trade shows, and other media such as farm publications, the newspaper, and television.
- Producers like AgriCarta because it offers interesting, general information and is easy to navigate.

Angus Reid Survey:

In the spring of 1999, the Angus Reid Group launched a new syndicated study: Ag Webrate™. This study involved the evaluation of agricultural web sites by producers from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. Eight different agricultural web sites were evaluated based on content, format & design and navigational issues.

Some highlights of the survey are:

- Awareness of AgriCarta:
 - Saskatchewan - 42%
 - Manitoba - 14%
 - Alberta - 8%
 - Ontario - 5%
- Frequency of Use:
 - 38% visit the site only as needed
 - 13% visit the site on a monthly basis
 - 10% visit the site on a weekly basis.
 - 22% had never visited the web site before
 - Saskatchewan recruits visited the AgriCarta site more frequently
 - 17% visiting it on a monthly basis
 - 12% visiting it weekly.
- Best Agricultural Web Sites:
 - Ropin' the Web - 16%
 - AgInfoNet and AgriCarta - 14%
- The response to AgriCarta by producers that evaluated this site was positive
 - 23% of responses being very positive
 - 8% being positive or very positive
- Producers from Saskatchewan reacted more positively
 - 94% giving a positive response
 - Manitoba - 85%
 - Alberta - 65%
- AgriCarta was "liked" for the relevance of information (25%) as well as its ease of use and understanding (20%)

Change in level of adoption

Farmers in Saskatchewan have significantly increased their usage of the Internet over the last three years. In April of 1997 10% (4% in 1996) of Saskatchewan farmers were using the Internet for agricultural purposes, largely for information. In 1998 our results indicated 16%. Based on a 1999 AIMS survey farmers in Saskatchewan on the Internet continued to increase and was over 25%. The usage was changing, as a significant number of Internet users were starting to use it on a daily basis, and many were becoming interested in using it for more than just receiving information.

Best estimates for farmer Internet connections by the summer of 2000 indicate a level as high as 40 – 45%.

Web Trends Software

Aginfonet.com uses a "WebTrends" software package to measure usage of the Aginfonet.com and AgriCarta websites. WebTrends software is used by many websites to conduct statistical analysis of web traffic.

Beginning in September 1999, a separate report for AgriCarta usage has been generated. Based on this report, traffic to AgriCarta is measured at over 15,000 user sessions or "visits" per month. This is a significant level of usage, compared with other areas of the Aginfonet.com website. In March 2000, the number of visitors to AgriCarta got as high as 24,000 users!

AgriCarta On-line Survey

An On-line survey of AgriCarta users was conducted starting March 18, 2000 and ending May 1, 2000. The purpose of the survey was to assist in determining the over-all success of the AgriCarta project, as well as to help determine the demographics and information needs of AgriCarta users.

The following is a summary of the results:

66% of AgriCarta users purchased their computers more than 2 years ago

59% of AgriCarta users state 56K as their computer's modem speed

100% of AgriCarta users have a PC computer (no Macs)

56% of AgriCarta users use Netscape 4 and up

22% of AgriCarta users use Internet Explorer 5 and up

74% of AgriCarta users are from Saskatchewan

91% of AgriCarta users are from western Canada

65% of AgriCarta users state agriculture production as their primary source of income

44% of AgriCarta users visit once a week

72% of AgriCarta users visit at least once per month

79% of AgriCarta users access AgriCarta through the AginfoNet.com home page

32% of AgriCarta users access AgriCarta to keep up to date

26% of AgriCarta users access AgriCarta to access research information

19% of AgriCarta users access AgriCarta to discover new production methods, markets, etc.

6% of AgriCarta users rated the content in AgriCarta as excellent

54% of AgriCarta users rated the content in AgriCarta as very good

37% of AgriCarta users rated the content in AgriCarta as good

3% of AgriCarta users rated the content in AgriCarta as fair

No users of AgriCarta rated the content in AgriCarta as poor

"Crops" is the most commonly visited area of AgriCarta, followed by "Farm Business Management", "Technology", and "Livestock". The least commonly visited areas are "Organic Farming" and "Health, Safety and Rehabilitation".

25% of AgriCarta users use the "search" feature

59% of AgriCarta users found out about AgriCarta from a link from AginfoNet.com

3.0 Personnel

Update as of September 30, 2000:

The following project funds have been used which includes salaries or professional fees (total to date):

Employer	Services	Amount
Rarebit Digital Solutions	Consulting / technical	51,629.99
Brown Interactive	Consulting / technical / creative	32,525.77
AgInfoNet	Consulting/technical/creative Christina Leclerc Morgan Wadsworth Lane Shordee	111,252.90
AgInfoNet	Professional Salaries for Project Management, Project Administration Doug McNair Diane Barber Richard Kies Deana Gyorfí Claudette Merk Leslie Moldenhauer	183,684.14
Furman & Kallio	Legal fees (trademark)	3,374.79
AgInfoNet	Business Administration / Site Updates Diane Barber Deana Gyorfí Claudette Merk Leslie Moldenhauer	63,781.60
	Technical Salaries for Students Keith Leippi Jeff Lawrence Dan Kasperski Kirsten Faller Colin Svingen Lee Evans Kevin Langenberger	46,104.51
	Professional Salaries for Agrologists & Benefits Faith Martin Terri-Lynn Holownia	165,076.47

4.0 Equipment

Final Update as of September, 2000:

Equipment purchased or rented with project funds:

Internet Server and Internet Connection

Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. negotiated a lease agreement to March 30, 2000 with SaskTel for an Internet server, and dedicated connection to the Internet, to 'house' Warren's Farm and Ranch Directory / AgInfoNet On-Line, AgriCarta, and the Aginfonet.com website. Payments for the server and Internet access started September 1, 1997 and were paid for from budgeted funds from AFIF under Activity 1 and Activity 4 of the contract, and from the Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. budget. In May 2000 a lease was signed by Aginfonet Canada Corporation with Telus and server space for Warren's Farm and Ranch Directory / AgInfoNet On-Line and AgriCarta have been paid to Aginfonet Canada Corporation. (From October 1, 2000, Aginfonet Canada Corporation will be providing server space for AgriCarta directly, at no charge.)

Internet Server for Net.commerce

Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. negotiated a web hosting agreement to March 31, 2000 with an extension to September 2000, with McNair Business Development Inc. on a short-term basis. The E-commerce site is setup on an NT operating system supplied by McNair Business Development Inc. with the following server environment: 400 MHz Intel Celeron Processor, 4.3 Gig Hard drive, 128 MB of RAM; Daily backups with offsite storage and network monitoring; NT operating system; Locked server; UNIX firewall. (From October 1, 2000, Aginfonet Canada Corporation will be providing server space for any net.commerce applications directly, at no charge.)

Office Space / Computer Equipment / Internet Connection

Office space, computer equipment and dedicated Internet connection were leased for students for two months in 1997, for the four months in 1998, and for the eight months in 1999 that students were working under Activity 4. Office space, computer equipment and dedicated Internet connection were leased to the AgriCarta agrologists as well on a monthly basis.

Computer Monitor

A large 17" computer monitor was purchased to be used to demo AgriCarta at trade shows and meetings.

Tradeshow Booth

A tradeshow booth was purchased in the spring of 1998 for use during the course of the

project at major tradeshow. New panels for the tradeshow booth were purchased in the fall of 1999 to reflect the changes to the website.

Digital Camera

A digital camera was purchased in the fall of 1998 for use with the On-Line catalogue.

5.0 Project Photos

Update to September, 2000:

Attached are current printouts of the

1. Aginfont.com Home Page
2. AgriCarta Home Page
3. Weather Page
4. Market's Page
5. AgLinks Page
6. MAINstreet
7. Become a Resource Specialist Area
8. Resource Specialist Administration Menu
9. Resource Specialist On-Line Help Manual

6.0 Innovation Fund Acknowledgement

Saskatchewan AgInfoNet, Inc. assisted Joe Ralko of AFIF when requested to help promote AFIF.

Update to December 31, 1997:

We were in regular contact with Joe Ralko of AFIF to ensure that we appropriately acknowledge that these projects have been funded by AFIF. We incorporated the AFIF logo into the new AgInfoNet partnership page. We incorporated the logo on the AgriCarta homepage.

Update to April 30, 1998:

We provided some options to the AFIF Board to promote greater visibility throughout AgriCarta for the funding contribution of AFIF. Direction was received and changes have been made to the site.

The media event planned for AgriCarta on January 8 was cancelled.

AgriCarta and its funding source have been mentioned during radio interviews and press interviews.

We have been included in a number of publications. We have contributed to stories and articles and radio interviews as requested by Joe Ralko.

Update as of August 31, 1998:

We produced a brochure titled " Information Technology and Prairie Agriculture" in conjunction with a number of sponsors including AFIF. This brochure received wide distribution.

We prepared a joint AgInfoNet/AgriCarta presentation folder for use in meetings to promote AgriCarta/AgInfoNet. Acknowledgement is given to AFIF.

Update as of January 31, 1999:

There is appropriate recognition of AFIF on the On-Line Catalogue homepage, as well as recognition on the Business Registry brochure.

Update as of June 30, 1999:

Recognition continues throughout AgInfoNet's website. No new collateral material has been produced.

Update as of March 31, 2000:

Recognition continues throughout the Aginonet.com website. AFIF's logo appeared on the 2000 AgInfoNet User Guide for E-commerce and on the Sponsor Board of the March 2000 Conference titled "E-Business for Agriculture – It's Here", and on the conference folders.

Final Update as of March 31, 2000:

Recognition continued throughout the Aginonet.com website for services developed under funds from AFIF.

7.0 Project Public Information Materials

In the first year, two pieces of public information, a brochure concerning AgriCarta and one for Warren's Farm and Ranch Directory / AgInfoNet Online were developed and distributed.

In 1998, a brochure on survey results, a presentation folder, a special insert page and a tradeshow booth were developed. A brochure for the Business Registry and a brochure for the On-Line Catalogue were produced and distributed in the fall of 1998.

AFIF's logo appeared on the 2000 AgInfoNet User Guide for E-commerce. 50,000 copies were distributed beginning at Agribition in November 1999. As well, on the conference packages, 150 copies were distributed.

The AgriCarta display has appeared at the following trade shows:

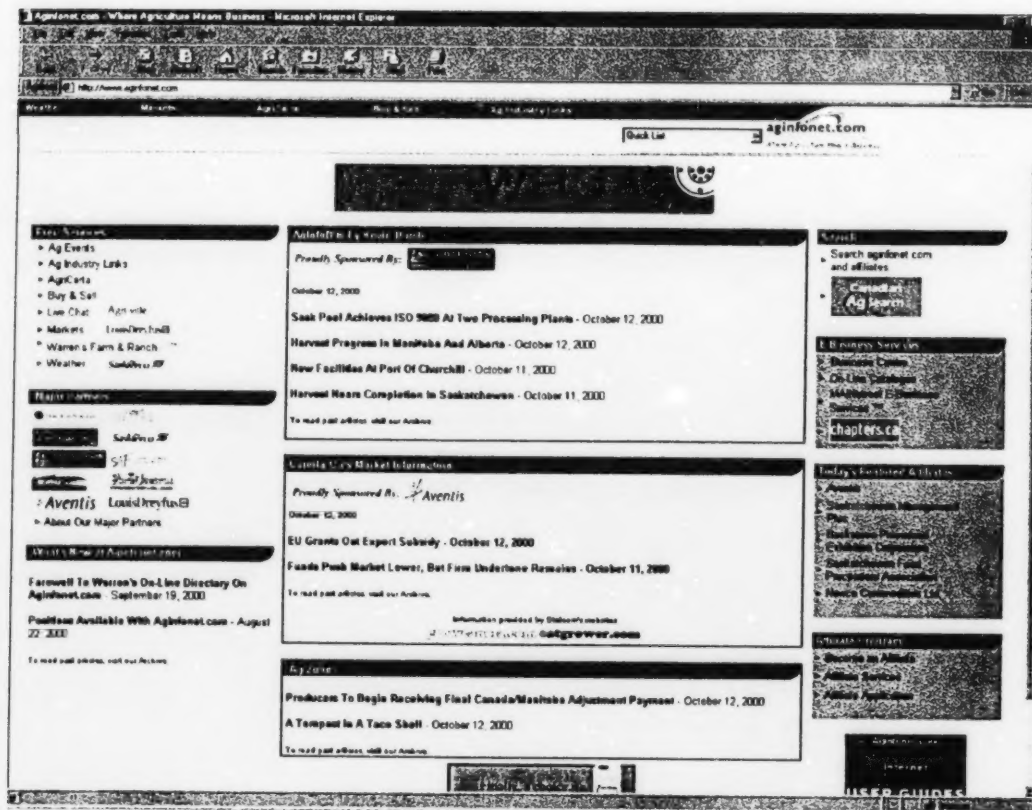
- May 1998 Joint Library Conference in Brandon, Manitoba
- August 6, 1998 - Grain Bin Giveaway in Kindersley
- August 8 & 9, 1998 - Weyburn Wheat Festival
- September 23-25, 1998, the Manitoba Rural Library Conference in Brandon
- November 11-14, 1998 - Yorkton Harvest Showdown
- November 22-29, 1998 - Canadian Western Agribition
- January 12-15, 1999 - Crop Production Show
- January 19 & 20, 1999 - Cattlemen's Corral Crop Visions
- January 23, 1999 - Saskatchewan Livestock Convention
- February 16, 1999 - Watrous – "Innovations to Diversification and Development"
- February 22, 1999 - Saskatchewan Management Plus Launch (Leroy)
- February 25, 1999 - Yorkton Forages Seminar
- March 6, 1999 - Saskatchewan Katahdin Sheep Association AGM
- March 10, 1999 - AgInfoNet Conference
- March 17 & 18, 1999 - Prince Albert Farm Fair
- March 18, 1999 - Yorkton – Seabuckthorn Seminar
- April 8-10, 1999 - Agri-Mex (North Battleford)
- April 16-18, 1999 - Nipawin Lions Trade Show
- May 13-15, 1999 - Saskatchewan Library Association AGM
- June 16-19, 1999 - Farm Progress Show
- June 24, 1999 - Beef Development Centre Field Day
- September 30, 1999 – STEP (Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership) Annual General Meeting
- November 22-28, 1999 – Agribition
- January 11-14, 2000 - Crop Production Show
- January 18-20, 2000 – Manitoba Ag. Days
- February 2-3, 2000 – SK. West Forum 2000 (Rosetown, SK.)
- February 15-17, 2000 – CAAR Convention (Canadian Association of Agricultural Retailers)
- March 23, 2000 – AgInfoNet Conference
- June 11-14 2000 – Western Canadian Farm Progress Show

8.0 Expense statement

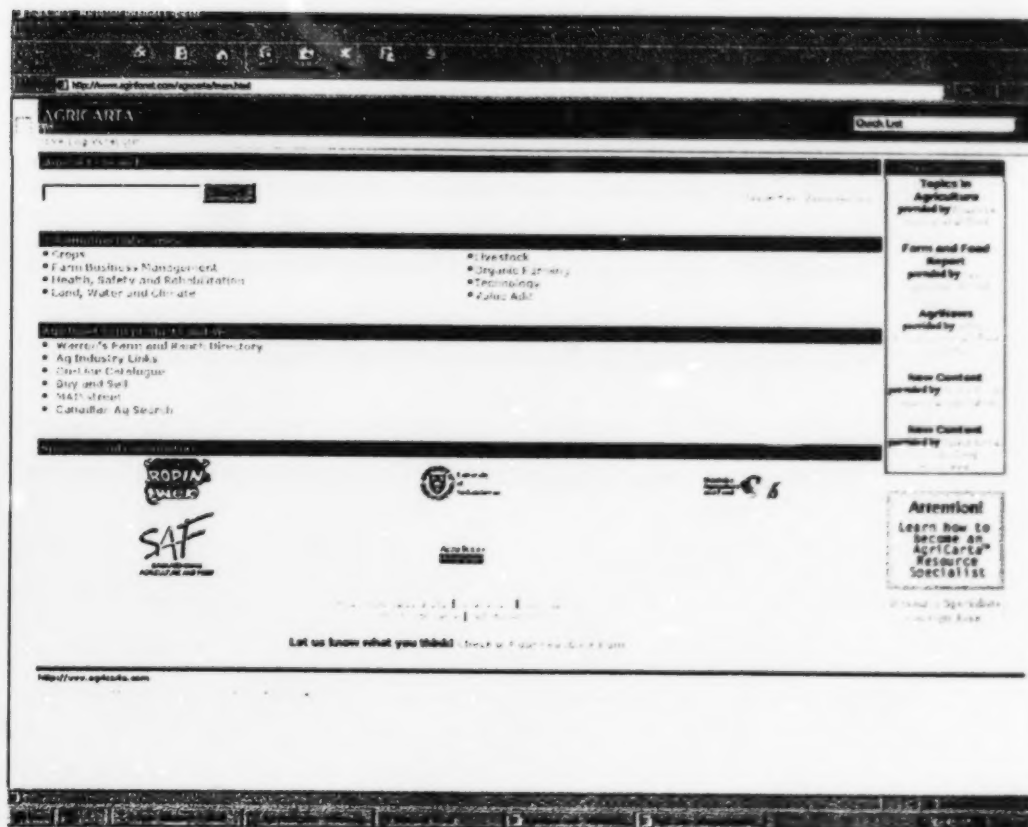
Update as of September 30, 2000:

Attached is a Project Financial Statement indicating our expenditures under the approved plans and budgets to the end of September 30, 2000.

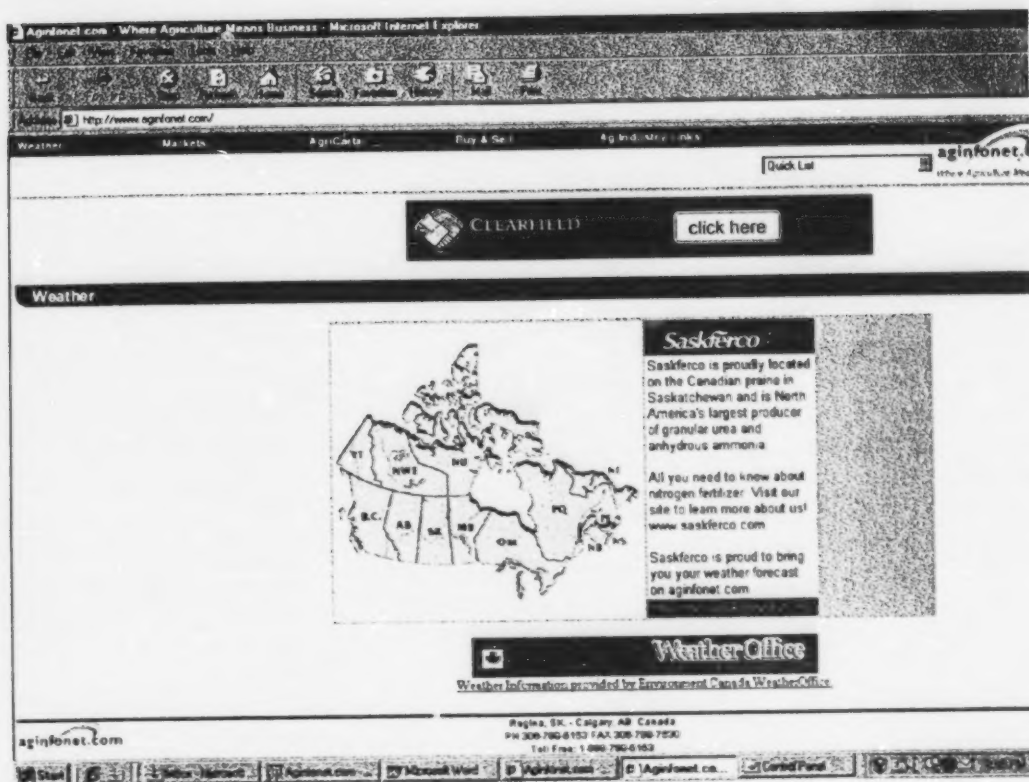
Attachment: Project Photos



Aginfont.com Home Page



AgriCarta Home Page



Weather Page

Aginet.com: Where Agriculture Means Business. Microsoft Internet Explorer

http://www.aginet.com/

aginet.com

Markets

LouisDreyfus

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- AGRICULTURE AND OPTIONS - MARKET COMMENTARY - COMMODITY REPORTS - AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH	- COMMODITY PRICE CHARTS - COMMODITY MARKET TRENDS - AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS - AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS
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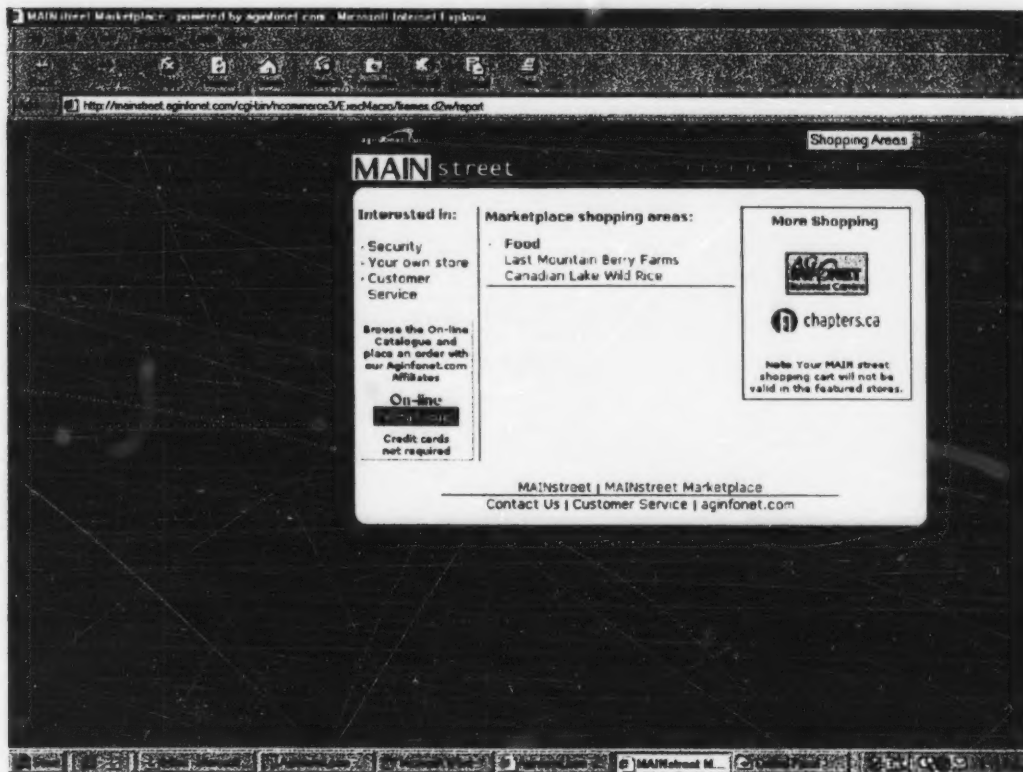
Foreign and Domestic - Winnipeg Commodity Exchange 15 MINUTE DELIVERABLES - Daily Price Charts - Daily Futures/Options Settlement Prices - Daily Cash Prices - Cash Values/Net Interest - Weekly Information - Market Information - Market Data - Daily Market Commentary Minneapolis Grain Exchange - MARKET DATA - SPRING MARKET - CASH MARKET - MARKET COMMENTARY Chicago Board of Trade - Charts, Data & Settlements - Market Data - Market News	FBM Network Bulletin - FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC - Chicago Board of Trade Futures Charts - Chicago Board of Trade Futures Chicago Mercantile Exchange - Futures Prices (All months listed) - Cash Prices (All months listed) - Cash and Futures Charts Other - CME Information - Chicago Board of Trade Quotes & News - Mid-America Commodity Exchange - U.S. Commodity Futures and Options Charts
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Copyright and Credits

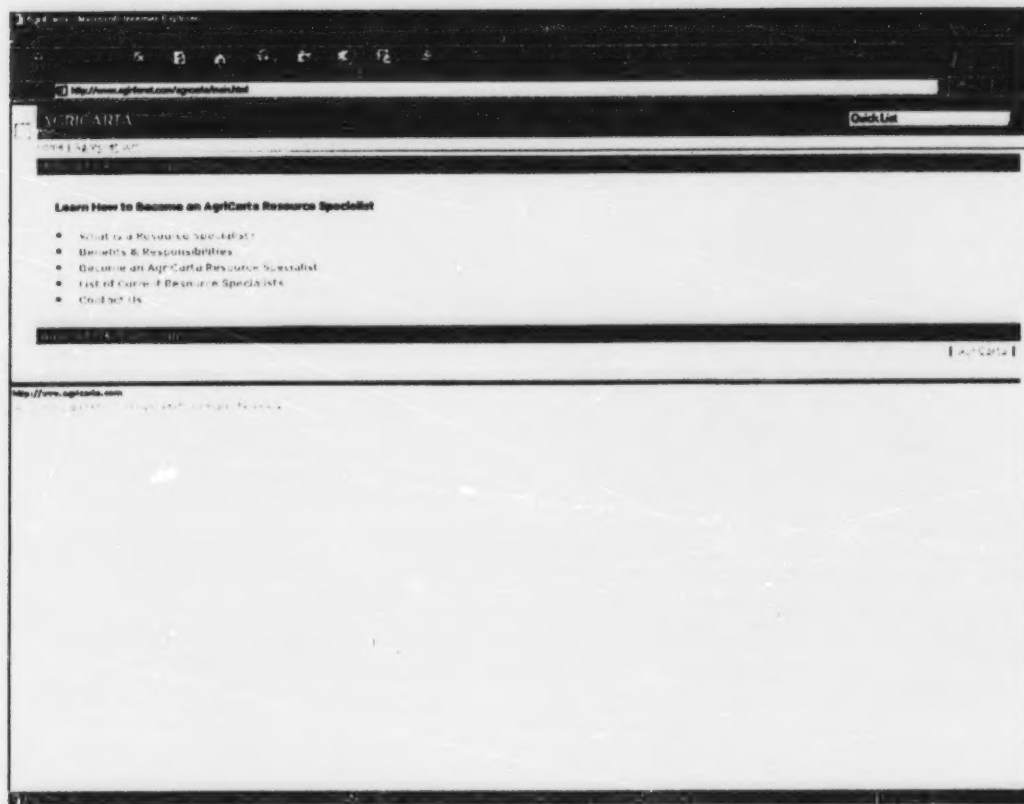
Our Mission

Market's Page

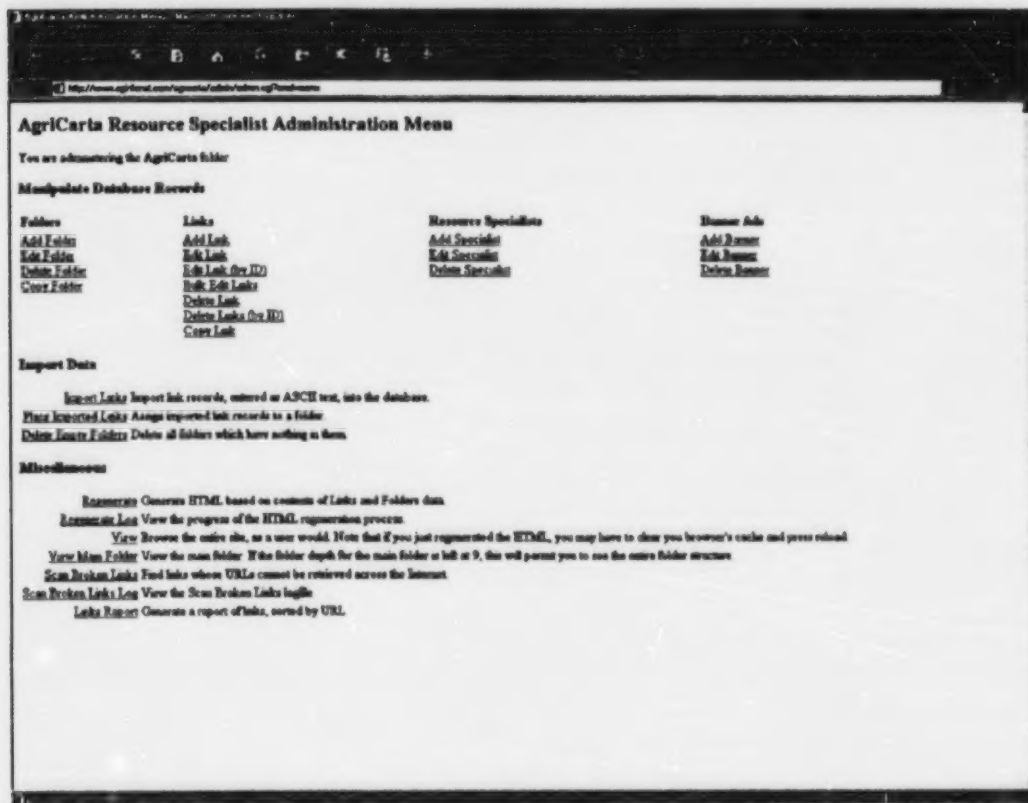




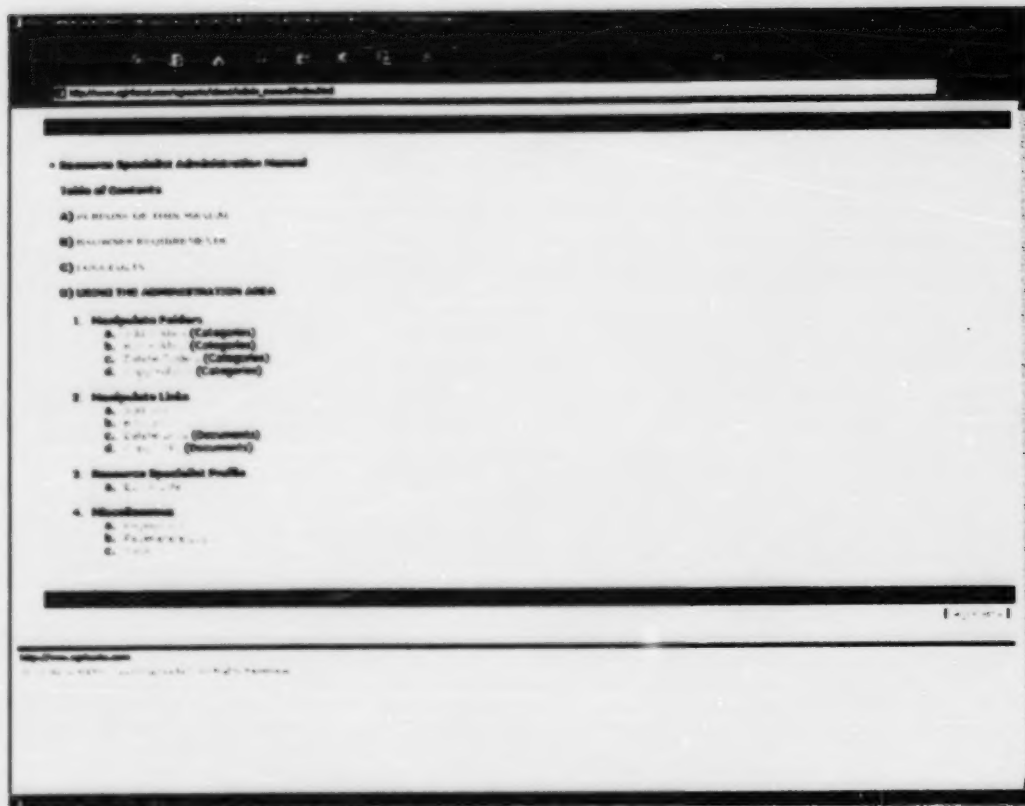
MAINstreet



Become a Resource Specialist Area



Resource Specialist Administration Area



Resource Specialist On-line Help Manual